

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ALEXAN 00514 01 OF 03 021643Z
ACTION NODS-00

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O 021530Z JUL 78 ZFF4
FM AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
TO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1836
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 ALEXANDRIA 0514

EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS

FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, EG
SUBJECT: EGYPT ON THE EVE OF YOUR ARRIVAL

1. SUMMARY: WELCOME TO EGYPT. SADAT APPRECIATES YOUR
DECISION TO VISIT EGYPT AND LOOKS FORWARD TO HIS TALKS
WITH YOU. HE WILL BE INTERESTED IN HEARING WHAT YOU CAN
CONVEY ABOUT YOUR TALKS IN ISRAEL. ALTHOUGH HIS ASSOCI-
ATES ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY SKEPTICAL OF ME
PEACE PROCESS PROSPECTS, SADAT PROFESSES RETAIN HIS
OPTIMISM. I AM CONVINCED HE WANTS PEACE. HE RETAINS
GREAT TRUST IN PRESIDENT CARTER AND IS PERSUADED THAT
ONLY HOPE OF BREAKING CURRENT IMPASSE IS A DIRECT USG
PROPOSAL. HE HAS LITTLE CONFIDENCE IN PROPOSED KAMEL/
DAYAN MEETING, BUT IS GOING ALONG WITH IT BECAUSE OF
PRESIDENT CARTER'S SUGGESTION THAT SUCH A MEETING
IS NECESSARY FOR USG TO POSITION ITSELF. HE RETAINS
HIS LINING FOR WEIZMAN AND HE REJECTED PROPOSED REPLY
TURNING DOWN ANOTHER GAMASY/WEIZMAN MEETING. INSTEAD,
HIS REPLY LEAVES DOOR AJAR TO SUCH A MEETING IF

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ISRAELIS ADD SOME "NEW ELEMENTS". MUCH CRITICIZED
ISRAELI RESPONSES TO OUR TWO QUESTIONS ARE INSUFFI-
CIENT TO MAKE HIM VENTURESOME ON ANOTHER GAMASY/
WEIZMAN MEETING UNLESS SOME CONVINCING EXPLANATION
CAN BE ADDUCED THAT THEY MEAN MORE THAN APPEARS ON THE
SURFACE. APART FROM ARAB/ISRAELI IMPASSE, SOVIET
ACTIVITIES IN SUB-SAHARA AFRICA ARE HIS PRINCIPAL PRE-

OCCUATION. OTHER CONCERNS ARE DEPLORABLE ECONOMIC SITUATION AND HIS RECENT DELIBERALIZATION CAMPAIGN. SADAT REMAINS POPULAR, BUT HIS STANDING HAS SUFFERED IN EGYPTIAN PUBLIC EYE BECAUSE OF STALLED PEACE PROCESS AND SLUGGISH ECONOMIC PROGRESS. ALL EVIDENCE AT HAND, HOWEVER, SUGGESTS THAT EGYPTIAN MILITARY CONTINUES TO SUPPORT HIM, ALTHOUGH IT TOO IS GRUMBLING ABOUT STALLED PEACE PROCESS AND RISING PRICES. DOMESTIC CRITICISM, SUCH AS IT IS, IS NOT AT PRESENT A SERIOUS CONSTRAINT ON SADAT'S ABILITY TO PURSUE PEACE PROCESS. END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING MAY BE OF USE TO YOU AS YOU PREPARE FOR YOUR TALKS IN EGYPT.

3. SADAT IS LOOKING FORWARD TO YOUR VISIT. HE APPRECIATES YOUR DECISION INCLUDE ALEXANDRIA STOP, EVEN THOUGH BRIEF, IN YOUR ITINERARY. HE KNOWS OF YOUR PAST STRONG SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL, RESPECTS THIS AND RECALLS WITH PLEASURE HIS MEETINGS WITH YOU AT WHITE HOUSE AND CAMP DAVID. THUS, YOU MAY EXPECT HIM TO BE CANDID IN HIS COMMENTS.

4. SADAT WILL BE INTERESTED IN HEARING WHAT YOU CAN CONVEY ABOUT YOUR TALKS IN ISRAEL. AS YOU KNOW, HE IS DISAPPOINTED WITH THE ISRAELI RESPONSES TO OUR TWO
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QUESTIONS ON THE FUTURE OF THE WEST BANK/GAZA AND THE SUBSEQUENT PRECIPITOUS ISRAELI REJECTION OF HIS WEST BANK/GAZA COUNTERPROPOSAL BEFORE IT WAS FORMALLY PRESENTED. HE HAS BEEN SHORTSIGHTED, AS DAYAN HAS RIGHTLY SUGGESTED, IN PUBLICLY ANNOUNCING THE ESSENCE OF HIS PROPOSAL BEFORE IT WAS PRESENTED, BUT THIS IS TYPICALLY SADAT. HIS IS AN ACTIVE MIND, AND HE CHARACTERISTICALLY HAS TROUBLE IN KEEPING HIS GREAT IDEAS TO HIMSELF. THE ISRAELI POSITION THAT SADAT'S WEST BANK/GAZA IDEAS HAVE ONLY BEEN REJECTED AS A PRECONDITION TENDS TO BE LOST HERE AND YOU MAY BE ABLE TO CLARIFY THE NON-ABSOLUTE ASPECT OF THE REJECTION (IF THIS IS

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EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS

FOR VICE PRESIDENT FROM AMBASSADOR

INDEED SO) ON THE BASIS OF YOUR JERUSALEM TALKS.

5. ALTHOUGH SADAT'S CLOSEST ASSOCIATES (HE REALLY HAS NO ADVISERS) ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY LEERY OF THE ME PEACE PROCESS SO LONG AS BEGIN IS IN OFFICE, SADAT THUS FAR PROFESSES TO RETAIN HIS OPTIMISM. I AM CONVINCED THAT HE REALLY WANTS PEACE, PARTLY BECAUSE EGYPT NEEDS IT FOR ECONOMIC REASONS AND PARTLY BECAUSE HE IS INWARDLY AWARE THAT THE WAR OPTION IS NO LONGER VIABLE FOR HIM. AT THE SAME TIME, HE CANNOT PUBLICLY ADMIT THESE TWO IMPERATIVES THAT IMPELL EGYPT TOWARD PEACE. RATHER HE PROJECTS HIS PEACE ASPIRATIONS, NOT ENTIRELY WORNGLY, AS STATESMANSHIP AND HIS GENUINE CONCERN FOR HIS PEOPLE AND FOR THE WORLD AT LARGE. HE AGAIN EMPHASIZED TO CONGRESSMEN LEGGETT AND DUNCAN YESTERDAY HIS DESIRE FOR PEACE AND HIS WILLINGNESS, IF HUSSEIN DOES NOT WISH TO PARTICIPATE, TO NEGOTIATE EVEN THE WEST BANK ISSUE. YOU WILL HAVE SEEN CAIRO REPORTING TELEGRAM ON THAT MEETING, WHICH BOB LEGGETT ASKED BE PASSED TO
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YOU AS OF POSSIBLE USE. SADAT IS DEEPLY CONSCIOUS OF HIS PUBLIC RELATIONS SUCCESS WITH THE AMERICAN CONGRESS AND PUBLIC AND SEES THIS AS A POWERFUL ASSET IN INDUCING USG TO URGE ISRAELIS SHOW A MORE REASONABLE STANCE. HE HAS BEEN MADE AWARE OF HARM THAT HIS RECENT DELIBERALIZATION CAMPAIGN HAS DONE TO HIS IMAGE IN THE UNITED STATES AND WILL DOUBTLESS TRY TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS IN HIS JULY 22 SPEECH.

6. SADAT RETAINS GREAT TRUST IN PRESIDENT CARTER AND IS PERSONALLY PERSUADED THAT THE ONLY HOPE OF BREAKING THE CURRENT IMPASSE IS THROUGH A USG PROPOSAL OR WHATEVER WE CARE TO CALL IT. HE HAS LITTLE CONFIDENCE IN THE PROPOSED KAMEL/DAYAN MEETING, BUT IS GOING ALONG WITH IT BECAUSE OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S SUGGESTION THAT SUCH A MEETING IS NECESSARY TO ENABLE USG POSITION ITSELF FOR FUTURE MORE DIRECT INTERVENTION. HE HAS COME TO RECOGNIZE FROM OUR REPEATED COMMENTS TO HIM THAT HIS WITHDRAWAL OF THE EGYPTIAN DELEGATION FROM THE JERUSALEM POLITICAL TALKS WAS A TACTICAL MISTAKE AND ACCEPTS THE PROPOSITION THAT A KAMEL/DAYAN MEETING IS NEEDED TO REDRESS SITUATION. BUT FACT REMAINS THAT HE HAS LITTLE CONFIDENCE IN DAYAN AND THAT KAMEL, WHILE PERSONALLY CLOSE TO SADAT, IS NOT ONE OF HIS BIG GUNS.

7. HE PERSONALLY LIKES WEIZMAN AND BELIEVES LATTER IS SINCERE IN HIS DESIRE FIND MUTUALLY AGREEABLE (IF THIS IS POSSIBLE) SOLUTIONS TO THE VARIOUS OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS. SADAT IS AWARE THAT WEIZMAN HAS IN MANY WAYS BLOTTERED HIS OWN COPYBOOK THROUGH ABORTIVE JOUSTING WITH BEGIN, BUT WOULD LIKE TO DO WHAT HE CAN TO GIVE WEIZMAN SOME KIND OF BOOST. HENCE,
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SADAT'S REJECTION OF THE MUBARAK/GAMASY DRAFT REPLY TO WEIZMAN TURNING DOWN AN ISRAELI PROPOSED MEETING BETWEEN GAMASY AND WEIZMAN AND HIS SUBSTITUTE REPLY WHICH LEAVES THE DOOR AJAR TO SUCH A MEETING IF THE ISRAELIS ADD SOME "NEW ELEMENTS". QUESTION IS WHAT "NEW ELEMENTS" ARE NEEDED. FOR SADAT, IT IS PROBABLY (A) SOME INDICATION OF ISRAELI WILLINGNESS WITHDRAW FROM WEST BANK/GAZA (WITH MINOR BORDER RECTIFICATIONS), PROVIDED THE CONCERNED PARTIES SIT DOWN AND AGREE WITH ISRAEL ON SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS, (B) SOME ISRAELI EXPRESSION OF WILLINGNESS IN PRINCIPLE TO RESOLVE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM IN ALL OF ITS ASPECTS OR (C) SOMETHING ALONG THE LINE OF AT LEAST ONE OF THESE PRINCIPLES. THIS IS THE ESSENCE OF SADAT'S DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES CONCEPT, WHICH HE CONSIDERS ESSENTIAL TO PURSUE SINAI NEGOTIATIONS WITHOUT INCURRING ARAB (AND ESPECIALLY SAUDI AND PALESTINIAN) IRE THAT HE IS OPTING OUT. UNLESS SOME CONVINCING EXPLANATION CAN BE GIVEN SADAT THAT THE ISRAELI RESPONSES TO OUR TWO QUESTIONS MEANS MORE THAN APPEARS ON THE SURFACE, THEY ARE NOT LIKELY TO BE ADEQUATE TO MAKE HIM VENTURE-SOME ON ANOTHER GAMASY/WEIZMAN MEETING. HE IS KEENLY AWARE THAT USG AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AT LARGE

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EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS

FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT FROM AMBASSADOR

HAVE CRITICIZED ISRAELI RESPONSES AND DOES NOT WANT
TO TAKE THE HEAT OFF ISRAEL BY RUSHING INTO MORE
DIRECT EGYPTIAN/ISRAELI MEETINGS UNTIL HE HAS SOME
STRONG JUSTIFICATION, I.E., PRESIDENT CARTER'S INVITATION,
NEW ELEMENTS, ETC.

8. APART FROM ARAB/ISRAELI IMPASSE, SADAT'S
PRINCIPAL CURRENT FOREIGN POLICY CONCERN IS SUB-
SAHARA AFRICA. THIS LOOMS AS LARGE IN HIS MIND
(AND SOMETIMES LARGER) AS ARAB/ISRAELI PROBLEM DOES.
HE IS CONVINCED THAT THERE IS A SOVIET "GRAND DESIGN"
TO CONTROL SUB-SAHARA AFRICA, EVENTUALLY AS A WAY OF
OUSTING HIM AND NUMAYRI. BY THE SAME TOKEN, HE
BELIEVES THAT OUR AFRICAN POLICY IS UNREALISTIC, WEAK
AND NON-RESPONSIVE TO WHAT HE PERCEIVES TO BE A SERIOUS
SOVIET THREAT. WHILE I WOULD THINK THAT THE BULK OF YOUR
TALK WILL BE ON THE ARAB/ISRAELI PROBLEM, HE MAY RAISE
THE AFRICAN ISSUE.

9. SADAT'S OTHER TWO MAJOR CONCERNS ARE (A) THE
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ECONOMIC SITUATION AND (B) HIS RECENT DE-

LIBERALIZATION CAMPAIGN. ON THE LATTER, HE IS DEFENSIVE AND CONTENDS THAT THE DEMOCRACY THAT HE BESTOWED UPON EGYPT HAS BEEN ABUSED BY WAFDISTS AND LEFTISTS. THIS ABUSE, HE ARGUES, HAS HAD TO BE CURBED. IF THE SUBJECT ARISES, HE IS LIKELY TO ASSURE YOU THAT HE REMAINS COMMITTED TO THE CONCEPT OF INTRODUCING GENUINE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS IN EGYPT AND THAT HIS UPCOMING JULY 22 SPEECH TO THE NATION WILL DEMONSTRATE THIS. ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT, HIS PROBLEMS ARE HORRENDOUS. HE KEEPS TELLING HIS PEOPLE THAT THERE WILL BE TWO AND A HALF MORE YEARS OF AUSTERITY AND THAT THEREAFTER THE SITUATION WILL IMPROVE. THIS, TO MY MIND, IS A ROSEATE ESTIMATE. BUT EGYPTIANS HAVE THESE PAST FIFTEEN YEARS LIVED LARGELY ON HOPE AND SADAT MUST INEVITABLY CATER TO THE REQUIREMENT OF ENCOURAGING HOPE.

10. AT HOME, SADAT REMAINS A STRONG LEADER, BUT HIS STANDING HAS SUFFERED IN THE EGYPTIAN PUBLIC EYE FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS. A MAJOR REASON FOR THIS IS THE STALLED PEACE PROCESS. EGYPTIANS ARE FECKLESS. MANY OF THOSE WHO WILDLY CHEERED HIS INITIATIVE OF LAST NOVEMBER HAVE BECOME DISILLUSIONED AND NOW PRIVATELY CRITICIZE HIM FOR HAVING MADE THE TRIP, BEING OVERLY TRUSTFUL AND FOR PREMATURELY GIVING AWAY PRINCIPAL EGYPTIAN CARD, NAMELY NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS. MOREOVER, WHENEVER PEACE PROCESS SEEMS TO FALTER, PUBLIC ATTENTION INVARIABLY SHIFTS TO DEPRESSING ECONOMIC SITUATION, WHERE PROGRESS HAS AT BEST BEEN MINIMAL. DESPITE REPEATED EXPLANATIONS, HIS DE-LIBERALIZATION CAMPAIGN HAS ALSO HURT HIM AT HOME. WAFDISTS AND LEFTISTS HAVE IN EFFECT DEALT THEMSELVES
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OUT, BUT ORTHODOX MUSLIM RIGHTWING (MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD-TYPE) CRITICISM OF SADAT'S FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICIES IS POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS. SO FAR AS WE CAN TELL, THE ALL IMPORTANT EGYPTIAN MILITARY CONTINUES TO SUPPORT HIM, BUT THERE IS ALSO GRUMBLING IN THAT SECTOR ABOUT STALLED PEACE PROCESS AND POOR ECONOMIC SITUATION, ESPECIALLY RISING PRICES. THUS FAR, HOWEVER, SUCH DOMESTIC CRITICISM ACHCBBY

11. WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR VISIT AND WILL DO UTMOST MAKE IT BOTH PRODUCTIVE AND PLEASANT. MCCLELLAND

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